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567 professional slave-trading; they acted as middlemen between the slave markets of the north, Kano, Katsina, and others, and the buyers in the south, on the river and coast.[1]

567 At the time of the Fulani conquest the price paid locally for an able-
435 bodied male slave was 40,000 cowries, i.e. £1, and for a female slave 50,000 cowries, i.e. £1. 5s.[2] The price of slaves rose very high in later times. Shortly before the British occupation it had reached the sum of £7 for male, and £7. 10s. for female slaves. As my inquiries from various informants showed, this price had become almost standardized in the last decade before the British occupation and was valid throughout the country. It is interesting to note that this rise in price took place at a time when the largest market for slaves from Nupe was disappearing, shipments of slaves to countries overseas, especially to the Americas, having come to an end. We cannot say how this rise in price started, nor what might have been its cause. I can only suggest that it was due to increased difficulties of supply. Half a century of wars and raids had denuded the country of people who could with no great difficulty be made slaves. Slave-raiders were forced to obtain their human chattels in more distant areas and by more serious warfare—in the language of the economist, under conditions of higher 'cost'. Whatever the cause, this rise in price meant that the commoners and peasants of Nupe could derive from the wars and raids by which their rulers gained their fortunes not even the benefit of cheaper slave labour. Commoners and peasants would suffer when their country was defeated and their villages invaded by the enemy, or when, in civil wars, rival troops fought on their land. But the fruits of victory—rich booty in slaves—they could share only at a price: the same price which foreigners had to pay when buying slaves from Nupe in the open market.

567 Slaves were, in the strict sense of the word, the property of their masters. If anyone killed a slave belonging to somebody else this was
[685] not regarded as a case of murder or manslaughter, but only as an offence demanding restitution of the 'destroyed' property, i.e. the full purchase price had to be paid over to the owner. But the slaves who were kept in the houses of the Nupe nobility were on the whole well treated. The master of a slave was quite within his rights if he chose to maltreat him, sell him again, or even kill him. But there is no doubt that this happened rarely—if ever. Many slaves, in fact, preferred to stay on in the houses of their ex-masters when slavery was abolished, in the position of an unpaid servant or retainer, rather than to start life on their own, especially if they were of advanced age. Custom even guaranteed the

[1] Barth states that most of the slaves from Kano were carried by small caravans to Bornu and Nupe; 'the best of slaves now go to Niffee (Nupe) to be there shipped for America. . . . Slaves are sent from Zinder to Niffee. Indeed it now appears that all this part of Africa is put under contribution to supply the South American market with slaves' (Dr. Barth, op. cit. ii, pp. 132 and 135). Lander mentions that the slaves brought to Rabá were purchased by southern peoples, traded down the Niger, and from there 'delivered from hand to hand till they at length reached the sea' (op. cit. ii, p. 298).

[2] See Schoen-Crowther, *Journals*, p. 194, and J. and R. Lander, op. cit. ii, p. 298.

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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

*Sheep and Goats*

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself.

*Other Domestic Animals*

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba.

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season.

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common land. The system of individual *bucd* work which runs parallel to the family work no doubt fosters such reckoning; no doubt also that this form of reckoning, essentially competitive as it is, must enhance the energy devoted by the individual worker to the common task. But such an attitude must also foster the tendency to split up and eventually dissolve the working-unit. In a small hamlet near Bida I discovered an interesting form of transition between full co-operation, which yet recognizes the individual share in the common work, and complete dissolution of the working-unit into independent agents. In the case to which I am referring the *efakó* group was divided into two working-units, each being engaged permanently on different fields although the yield produced by the two sections was still collected as the common *efakó* yield. The *efakó* group was formed by a father—a man of over 50—and his two married sons—of about 25 and 30. The father was working one group of plots and the two sons, together, another. The two groups of plots incidentally produced equally large crops, which was due to the fact that the old man could enlist outside labour on his farms and thus equalize the difference in working capacity between himself and his two sons.

## MAINTENANCE OF LABOUR

The produce of the *efakó* is handed over *in toto* to the family head. It is stored in the *efakó* granaries, and only the family head has the right to dispose of it. We shall discuss later in detail the various uses to which he may put it. But let me describe here one aspect of the employment of the *efakó* income, namely its use for the benefit of the *efakó* members themselves who helped to produce it, speaking more generally, for the maintenance of the labour organization. The question of maintenance of labour has, first, a strictly material aspect, namely, the supply of the means of production—the agricultural tools. The main agricultural instruments used in Nupe farming, as we have seen, are two kinds of hoe, bush-knife, and axe. They all have to be bought from the blacksmiths or, in the case of the bush-knife, from the European store, and must be repaired periodically—expenses which are by no means negligible. A heavy hoe costs between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*, a light hoe between 6*d.* and 1*s.*, axe and bush-knife between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*; repairs may amount to between 3*d.* and 4*d.* each time, that is, perhaps 1*s.* a year. Now, as long as the individual worker remains in the *efakó* group, the head of the group supplies new tools and pays for repairs. A man who leaves the *efakó* group to work on his own may take away the tools which he has been using—they have become 'his' tools—but from now on he must himself pay the cost of all repairs or the purchase of new tools.

[435]

The second, human, aspect in the problem of maintenance of labour is the maintenance of the workers themselves. They are housed, clothed, and fed by the family head. The head of the *efakó* group is responsible for all expenses that occur in connexion with the repair of the house and the huts in which his co-workers live; he provides their clothing and food—the section of the family group which is regularly

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326 592 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

326 434 435 Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s.*; this quantity is sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at the price of 6*d.* and 1*s.* a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d.*). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d.* and 3*d.* In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d.* in the dry season fetches 8*d.* in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s.*

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in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

*Guild Organization*

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths, whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system—the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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The Nupe brass-smith also practise soldering with tin, and one or 326 532 439 177



two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasãgizi*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s.* for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank. 326 439

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d.* apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d.*; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d.* Silver bangles are sold for 12*s.* a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s.*, and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d.* to 1*s.* Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s.*; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the profit per 326 434 435

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326 434 435 day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

326 Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relstions work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

326 467 The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

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One piece of

cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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There are three groups of bead-makers, *lantana*, as they are called, in Bida, one in each part of the town. Their work consists in 'refining' the crude or plain beads which are brought into the country from the north by Hausa and Arab traders, that is to say, they polish and sometimes bore these beads and grind them to various new shapes. The grinding and polishing is done on large flat sandstones especially brought to Bida from the river Niger. The grindstones and a few small iron tools for boring represent all the utensils used by the beadworkers; they are comparatively cheap—the grindstones are sold for 1*s.* in Bida—and the full equipment of a worker costs not more than two or three shillings. The beads are finished in different styles according to the nature of the bead and also according to the prevailing fashion and the demands of the market. The following styles of beads are in fashion to-day: long slender round beads, used for the *egbogi*, the chains of beads which the Nupe women wear round the waist; small ball-like round beads, with highly polished surface; and small flat triangular beads, worn as necklaces. The Nupe dislike edged beads and beads with dull surface; beads of this kind are polished and ground down to the desired shape and appearance. The grinding and polishing of the beads is a long and delicate work. The average production per worker is three beads a day. The finished beads are strung on cotton thread and arranged in long chains in which beads of different kinds and styles are often mixed, and are then ready for the market.

The beadworkers have no special workshops, but carry out their craft in the entrance hut of the compound. Four or five men are working in one hut; each man works independently, sitting on the ground behind his grindstone. As in all other crafts, the men who share the workshop are usually close relations who live in the house of which the entrance hut serves as workshop. Occasionally there is a distant relation or a stranger amongst them who lives in another house and comes there only to work. More rarely an individual beadworker who has no relations practising the same profession would work alone in his own house. Traders and buyers, who bring beads to be polished or bored, or who collect the finished article, are constant visitors in the workshops of the *lantana*.

In the economic arrangement which obtains in the Bida beadworking industry the majority of workers are reduced to the position of mere labourers, working to order and paid at a piece-rate. One of the bead-makers in the workshop may act as contractor: he buys the crude beads from the Hausa or Arab trader and has them worked by his fellow workers. He divides the work among them and pays them ½*d.* per bead. The finished chain of beads is entrusted to the wife of the contractor; she will sell it in the market or to one of the traders in beads, who will then 're-export' these products of Bida fashion industry to the north. A chain of crude beads bought for 7*s.* will fetch 10*s.* as the finished article; 2*d.* to 3*d.* go to the woman 'middleman' as commission, and about 1*s.* 8*d.* (for a chain, say, of forty beads) goes to pay the wages of the labourers, so the contractor can make a net profit of 1*s.* 2*d.* on work that took three to four days to complete; the individual labourers make in the same

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

| *Commodity* | *Profit per day* |
|---|---|
| Straw hats | 1*d.* |
| Grass-mats, oval | 1*d.* |
| Grass-mats, square | 1½*d.* |
| Mats made of stalk | 1½*d.* |
| Caps, embroidered | 2*d.* |
| Saddle-cloth, plain | 3*d.* |
| Saddle-cloth, embroidered | 4*d.* |
| Caps, machine-made | 8*d.* |
| Gowns, machine-made | 1*s.* 10*d.* |
| Gowns, embroidered | 3*s.* 0*d.* |

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

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294 They make as much as 1*s.* or 2*s.* on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4*s.* Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d.* to 4*d.* a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

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435 294 593 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

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294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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specifically social and cultural aspect. Efficiency in this sense means continuity of the craft and of craft knowledge; it means the ability to raise, through the medium of an hereditary, imperceptibly changing labour group, successive generations of craftsmen. If in these respects production is planned for an unchanging future, the agency of the third factor must expose it to the disruptive effects of time and change. For it may appear as if modern economic changes directed their most destructive attacks against this third condition of closeness and co-operation, which is dependence upon regular demand. This influence is especially visible in the gradual disappearance of orders from the main customer of the country, king and court. The Great *Sallah*, once the occasion for numerous orders from the court, which kept the workshops of Bida busy for weeks, is now an occasion for making purchases at the stores that trade in European goods. At the *Sallah* of 1935, the first *Sallah* of the newly installed *Etsu*, the traditional royal gifts of kola-nuts were sent out, not in ornamental brass bowls of native make, but in newly bought enamelled teapots; the king's bodyguard, newly equipped, wore, not Bida gowns and turbans or native-made straw hats, but red blankets and Trilby hats; and many notables who would have appeared formerly on horses with costly trappings and gorgeous saddle-cloths, rode in on new, shining bicycles. Conspicuous though the competition of European goods appears, it is not the only reason for the decline of Nupe craft-guilds. The very organization of guild-organized crafts has contributed to lowering their resistance to outside pressure. The inertia inherent in the rigid group-organization with its traditional standards of production prevents the craft-guild from readjusting itself to new demands with the same ease as the individual craftsman, who is free to change his mode of production and to gain success by new methods. The decision of the younger men among the weavers to abandon the traditional production and to turn to the more profitable production of cap-making, the success of the most 'individualistic' of all crafts, brass-work, are instances of this.

But readjustment involves in reality two different and independent processes: adjustment to modern conditions may mean both adjustment in price and cost of production, and adjustment with regard to the kind of goods produced. A close examination of this question is of special interest as attempts to preserve and help native arts and crafts are to-day officially sponsored by the educational departments in many African colonies. In these attempts the second type of adjustment is frequently taken into account exclusively, the first being either ignored or artificially eliminated by turning native crafts into tourist and 'curio' industries which can command prices quite out of proportion to the native economic system. That the Nupe crafts themselves have adjusted prices to demands is clearly shown in the general fall in prices which has taken place during the last five or ten years.[1] Thus mats of the best quality were sold, nine to ten years ago, for 3*s.*; in 1934 for 9*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936,

[1] In the two years I spent in Nupe country—two years which saw a partial economic recovery—I witnessed a corresponding slight rise in prices of native craft products.

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after a slight recovery, for 1*s.* 3*d.* Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.*; in 1934 8*d.* and 1*s.*; in 1936 5½*d.* and 1*s.* 3*d.*; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s.* or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

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three cases) abandon the craft altogether. Pottery also involves a certain co-operation between the women which goes beyond the single household. The pots are made in the house, individually, but the burning of the pots takes place in an open space outside, and in this the women from different compounds work together, building the fire of grass and firewood and using it jointly for the burning of their pots. This co-operation neither expresses kinship and tribal unity, as in the case of the *konú* women dyers, nor is it based on an organized occupational union as in the case of the handicrafts of the men. Rather is it an occasional, free co-operation for the sake of expediency which is suggested by the particular technique of this handicraft.

The question of the limitation of a woman's craft to a particular section of the population reappears, with a different meaning, in weaving. The women's weaving is done on the upright broad loom (21 in. wide), which, though produced to-day by the Bida carpenters, appears to have had its origin in the south, in Yoruba country, where I have also seen it used as a woman's loom. This technique of weaving is said to be comparatively new, and not traditionally Nupe, and may indeed have come to Nupe from Yoruba in the times of the Yoruba wars, through the medium of Yoruba wives and slaves of the Nupe nobility. For women's weaving is restricted to the womenfolk of the upper classes of Nupe society; only wives and daughters of the nobility or the 'intelligentsia' possess a loom and practise the craft. There is, in fact, no house of the upper classes in which you will not find several of these looms being used by girls and women. Conversely, looms and craft are completely absent in the poorer man's home. The technique is handed on from mother to daughter. In very few cases only was I informed that a wife had been taught weaving by her mother-in-law. The profit involved in this work corresponds to the average profit of the men's handicrafts. One big embroidered cloth, 2 yards long, is sold for 10*s*. to 15*s*., the material costing 5*s*.; the weaving takes thirty days (a cheaper, not embroidered, kind of cloth can be manufactured in half the time), and the profit per day is thus between 2*d*. and 3*d*. This gives us the explanation for the limitation of this craft to a specific social stratum. Only women who have servants (*bara* and formerly slaves) to help in the housework and to run errands for them can find the leisure for this long and delicate work. But the restriction of this woman's craft to one social stratum is only made possible through the existence of a unilateral endogamy—class endogamy—on the part of the women, who rarely marry beneath their station. If I am right, and these looms have been imported into Nupe from Yoruba, we have an interesting instance of class-restricted culture contact, that is, of cultural 'borrowing' which is at once fitted into, and made to subserve, the existing system of rigid social stratification.

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has his own speciality, his own expert knowledge, his cures, and his special field. No wonder, then, that the Bida barbers are not of equal standing: there are famous 'celebrities', and there are also the smaller fry. The public is aware of these distinctions. It is well aware also of the special field of certain foreign barber-doctors who frequently come to Bida to practise. Thus, for example, it is generally known that the operation of removing the uvula of children—an operation said to help growth and secure better nourishment—is performed only by Hausa barbers. The more surprising, then, is the fact that this array of specialists and special cures is not equally accessible to every citizen of Bida or Nupe. For the barbers are organized in three independent guilds, one in each *ekpā* of the town. Neither doctors nor patients ever ignore these boundaries. Each guild, or guild section, is under its own titled head, who as a rule has also a 'second-in-command' (who is 'heir designate' to the guild-headship at the same time) to assist him in guild work. In the *Etsu* Umaru quarter guild-head and 'second-in-command' are called *Ndeji* and *Ndabaki*; in the *Etsu* Usman quarter *Tsadzo* and *Ndamaraki*; in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter we find only one guild rank, who is the present head of the guild at large, the *Sokyara*. This highest guild office is taken in rotation by the three guild sections.

The Bida barbers, busy and prosperous, do not practise farming in addition to their main occupation; nor do sons of barbers ever follow any other profession. On the contrary, men of other professions may become barbers. I have recorded three recent cases: two were adults, one a farmer and the other a (Fulani) herdsman; the third was a young man, the son of a straw-hat maker; the two adults settled later as barbers in villages; the young man, who came from Bida, remained there to practise his craft. To learn the barbers' craft proper does not take long: the apprentice works only a year under a master (without changing his habitation). The master, during this time, pockets the larger part of the apprentice's earnings. The apprentice himself buys the instruments of his new trade—a collection of old-fashioned razors, costing about 4*s.* to 5*s.* But to learn the medical side of the craft requires (I was told) a five-years' apprenticeship. One of the two men just mentioned had done this, and is to-day a practising 'doctor'. Let me add that neither the 'trade secrets' of the barber-doctors nor the training in the craft involve any magical or religious conception and form of procedure. It is purely a craft technique.[1]

The special cures and forms of treatment are secrets of individual barber families. They are handed on from generation to generation and are the common property of all adults in a family (though not of the

[1] Nupe society also possesses a certain group of 'doctors', or, more precisely, 'medicine-men'—*cigbeciši* (*cigbe* means 'medicine')—whose craft is based on magical ideas and is closely linked with divining and the religious system of the country. I cannot describe here their organization more fully. I will only say that they practise mostly in the pagan districts, and that they are united in a loose 'order', acknowledging a common head, the *Etsu Cigbeciši* in Bida. To-day the modern conception of the barber-doctor is gaining ground also in the pagan villages. I found a significant effect of this transition in two Nupe villages—'medicine-men' and diviners who were practising barbers at the same time.

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he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zatóóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

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baskets (*kasa*); fruits and ground-nuts in *kasa* or *kara* (loads). The calculation is fairly precise, one 'load' of shea-nuts, for example, being reckoned to bring 2*s*., or one load of locust-beans 3*d*.

These examples suffice to illustrate the clear conception which the Nupe have of measures and marketable quantities. Combined with the universal use of money they result in a well-defined system of market prices. The calculation of market prices in Nupe corresponds closely to variations in supply and demand, above all, to seasonal fluctuations. We have already given instances. I will add here a few more which refer to the staple produce of the country.[1] In April and May 1936 one bundle of unthreshed sorghum was sold for 6*d*., in August and September for 9*d*. to 10*d*., and in certain places even for 1*s*. During the same time the price of bulrush-millet rose from 6*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. In April ten yams were sold for 6*d*.; at the beginning of June the price rose to 10*d*., and in July, shortly before the yam harvest, to 1*s*. 8*d*., to fall again in August to 6*d*. In the case of bulrush-millet and yam, the cultivation of which is restricted to certain districts, the fluctuations of price are markedly greater than in the case of the universal food-crop, sorghum. For rice, on the other hand, an expensive foodstuff for which there is only limited demand, and new supplies of which appear on the market three times a year, the price remained unchanged at 2*d*. for a small bowl.

These prices refer to village markets. Prices in Bida are always higher. When grain in the country sells for 6*d*. a bundle, the Bida price is 8*d*.; when the highest price in the country is 10*d*., it will reach in Bida 1*s*. and 2*s*. When yams are sold ten for 6*d*. in the country, the Bida price is ten for 9*d*., and so forth. Industrial products manufactured in Bida, on the other hand, are dearer in the districts, as the middlemen add a certain amount to the original price (between 1*d*. and 2*d*. in the shilling). Goods produced in the country which pass through the hands of the Bida trader on their way to Bida market or to markets abroad become markedly more expensive: thus Kutigi mats produced locally for 11*d*. are sold in Bida for 1*s*. or 1*s*. 2*d*., and abroad, for example in Lokoja, for 1*s*. 6*d*.

These regular variations and fluctuations in price must, to some extent at least, be based on a systematic common knowledge of the conditions which determine supply and demand in the country and which can thus sustain definite expectations of price developments at a given moment. Such a body of common knowledge indeed exists in Nupe. It is embodied in the universal experience that certain commodities are always plentiful in the dry season and get more and more scarce towards the close of the rains. It is also reflected in the generally accepted fact that prices are higher in the capital, which has to import a large proportion of its food-supplies, and which is also wealthier and possessed of a higher standard of living than the rest of the country. These considerations imply a further important fact viz. that distance between area of production and market, and the additional labour and loss of time involved in

[1] Certain fluctuations are determined by increased consumption during the festival season. Thus one sheep fetched 5*s*. in January and 10*s*. to 15*s*. in March, i.e. shortly before the Great Sallah, to fall again to 5*s*. during the rains (see p. 203, n. 1).

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transport, enter into the calculation of price and profit.[1] Finally, the economic significance of 'waiting' is fully recognized, and goods sold are at a proportionately cheaper price when they can be disposed of in larger quantities. I found, for example, that a trader on the market would sell two bowls of grain for 1½*d.*, but one bowl for 0·8*d.*; a large *evo* (containing 12 small bowls) of the same grain could be had for 8*d.* One large *evo* of rice (containing 10 small bowls) is sold for 1*s.* 6*d.*, while a small bowl would be priced at 2*d.* The factor of 'waiting' plays an important part also in the economy of the individual household. When money is urgently needed, or when for other reasons the whole crop is sold in one, the seller must be prepared to accept a less favourable price. A farmer in Lemu sold his whole crop of bulrush-millet and late millet for 4*d.* a bundle, in order to have sufficient money in hand for certain urgent household expenses (the marriage ceremony of one of his sons). With his sorghum crop he could afford to go more slowly, and obtained for it prices varying from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per bundle. Another farmer, near Bida, had to sell twelve bundles of late millet and sorghum for 1*s.* per bundle, as he was pressed for money for tax, well knowing that if he could afford to sell his grain in smaller quantities he could easily obtain 1*s.* 6*d.* a bundle.

This common knowledge of price-conditions seems also to explain the lack of haggling in Nupe marketing—to the student of African peoples a rather surprising feature. Cooked food, all victuals including grain, rice, palm-oil, &c., as also the common products of tailors, blacksmiths, mat-makers, and so forth, have 'fixed prices', and buyers will never try to bargain. They might, when buying yams or fish, a mat or a hoe, poke about in the goods displayed for sale till they find the biggest or nicest-looking specimen offered at the price they are willing to pay. Real haggling and bargaining is common only with expensive, more rarely sold, commodities, the price of which is always more or less fluid, and commodities the quality and perfection of which show many gradations: embroidered cloth, a woven gown, and all products of artistic value.

The common knowledge of price-conditions is limited by existing communications and forms of economic contact. Thus we find a uniform regulation of prices only within the area in which regular contacts of this kind exist; outside it the calculation of prices and profits, and productive planning in general, is determined by the varying local conditions of supply and demand. The most striking instance of this lack of co-ordination is perhaps the backward village of Sakpe to which I have referred in a previous chapter, where the people were unaware of the fact that the kapok from their silk-cotton trees had a money value in Bida. The following example, though referring to an exchange connexion going beyond Nupe country, is no less significant: in the same village, Sakpe, I met two men from Igbira country who had come to

[1] It is not unnecessary to mention especially this aspect of Nupe economic knowledge. For it is frequently found in more primitive societies that the economic value of time is not recognized and that native producers sell their goods at a distant market for the same price as they would locally.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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435 Nupe to sell dogs, and were greatly disappointed to find that dogs had no market value in that country. It need not be stressed that modern development of communications has greatly enlarged the area in which common price-conditions obtain. Railways, steamers, and road transport have become regular factors in native marketing and in the planning of native production.[1] The stores of the European trading-companies, which are the centres for the marketing in commercial crops, have helped to expand further this framework of common economic conditions. But these last factors have at the same time introduced a new element of insecurity into the body of native economic knowledge. The new, wider, framework of reference includes conditions of supply and demand which go far beyond those embodied in the native productive system, and calculations of price which are no longer accessible to the experience of the native producer—the conditions of supply and demand, and the calculations of price, determined by the state of European or American markets. The erratic and, to the native, incomprehensible fluctuations in the price of ground-nuts or cotton are typical instances; we have seen how, in the extreme case, they may completely upset native agricultural planning. The price policy of the trading-companies may also place a certain native productive area in a more unfavourable position than others: thus the price for ground-nuts paid by the United Africa Company in Nupe (that is Niger Province) was 5*s.* 6*d.* per ton as against 11*s.*, for an inferior quality, in Zaria or Kano. The conditions in cotton marketing were, till recently, similar.[2] Many enterprising native traders avail themselves to-day of the modern facilities of transport to visit these various towns and centres of trade: how can they be anything but bewildered by that unwarranted difference in price; or rather, they have learned to accept it as one more of the many incomprehensible arrangements brought in by 'the white man', and find a ready explanation for it in the fact that 'money is more plentiful in Zaria and Kano'.

We must consider here the relation between commodity prices and labour. The prices for the products of native industries given in an earlier chapter reflect, within limits, the varying amount of labour necessary for their production. The lowest daily profit with which the various Bida industries reckon is, as we have seen, between 1½*d.* and 2*d.* It is interesting to note that this amount corresponds to the lowest cost of living per day of an adult in Bida (see below, p. 342). The highest profits, on the other hand, may be determined not only by the amount of work, but also by the skill and artistic qualities which the work involves. We have seen that the artistic work of embroidery is paid more highly than ordinary tailor's work. If we compare, however, the average profits made in blacksmith work with the profits with which brass-smiths

[1] A Nupe trader known to me bought £5 worth of cheap kola-nuts in Lagos early in the season, stored them for 6 months, and then transported them by rail to Bida, where he sold his stock for £10.

[2] I was informed that this discrepancy in price was due mainly to the monopoly position of two large trading-companies in Niger Province, while in the north several companies have to compete with one another. The recently adopted control of the cotton markets by the Administration tends to maintain cotton prices at approximately the same level in the whole of Nigeria.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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reckon, we make the somewhat surprising discovery that here the more refined work is not only not more highly paid but partly even worse paid than the cruder industry. Both as regards profits per day and profits per article produced the brass-smiths work on the whole with lower profits than the blacksmiths.[1] Why, then, does the calculation of price and profit allow for an appreciation of the specific artistic qualities of the work of tailors and embroiderers but not in the analogous instance of brass-smith work? But is it an analogous instance? In the case of tailors and embroiderers both the cruder and the more refined technique belong to the same class of production: they are both what we may loosely call luxury industries. In blacksmith and brass-smith work we have fundamentally different industries, one supplying necessities, and the other a typical fashion and luxury industry. The explanation thus seems to be that indispensability may equal aesthetic value; and that where these two diverse types of industry compete side by side the factor of necessity may balance or outweigh the appreciation of artistic qualities.

## MARKET AND TRADE

We have had frequent opportunity to speak of the complexity of Nupe economics and of the far-reaching specialization of Nupe production, which must express itself most forcibly in the wide scope of trade and marketing. In a wider sense Nupe country itself is one big market. For Nupe is a country which exports and imports, and represents, besides, an important station on the route of transit-trade across Nigeria. The ancient trade-routes have to some extent been adjusted to-day to the new forms of communication, motor-roads, steamers, and railways. But to a large extent they have remained the same, for now as of old a large proportion of this transit-trade is carried to, and by, the water-way of the river Niger.

The following are the traditional trade-routes through Nupe. They run mostly roughly from north to south. One, coming from Sokoto and Birnin Kebbi, goes through Kontagora and reaches Nupe north of Mokwa; from here it goes either west, crossing the Niger at Jebba (formerly at Buka, five miles up the river) into Yoruba, or east through Labozi, Sakpe, to the Kaduna, which it crosses at Gbara, then south to Muregi and, after crossing the Niger, on to Yoruba and Kabba. A second route from Kontagora reaches Nupe Emirate north of Kutiwengi, passes through Dabbā and Kutigi, and crosses the river Niger at Ogudu, on the way to Ilorin. An alternative to this route branches off at Dabbā, crosses the Kaduna at Wuya, and ends at Bida. A third trade-route passes through Birnin Gwari and Wushishi, and reaches Bida via Gbangba. There are three routes from Bida to the south and south-east: one through Jima and Dokomba, down the Kaduna by canoe to Muregi,

[1] The profits of blacksmiths per object are: 3*d*., 3½*d*., 6*d*.; per day, 6*d*., 7*d*., 1*s*. The profits of brass-smiths per object are: 1½*d*., 2*d*.; per day, 3*d*., 6*d*. Higher profits are only realized in the casting of bangles in precious metal, in the casting of brass figures for tourist trade, and also in the production of ladles in the modern cheap material, aluminium.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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more severe and the advantageous positions secured by the enterprising first-comers are threatened by later recruits of the 'seeking-out-the-customer' movement.

Wayside shops also line the road leading from the north gate to the two large European stores—'canteens' in the popular idiom. Here the inventiveness of Bida traders has seized upon a new device to attract and 'seek out' the customer. Many peasants from backward villages who come to Bida to buy certain essential European articles, such as salt or sugar, either want to buy them in very small quantities—smaller quantities than they could obtain at the store—or are too shy and frightened to enter the stores themselves. These are the customers of the little stands outside the 'canteens': for here the peasants can buy the same articles in the smallest quantities and without having to undergo the ordeal of a purchase in the unfamiliar, forbidding, store.[1]

## MODERN BUSINESS METHODS

The last example brings us to another essential difference between the marketing system in Bida and in the village. The large volume of native trade in European goods and the close business connexion between native traders in Bida and the stores of the trading-companies have introduced certain completely new factors into Nupe marketing. They are visible in local trade on the smallest scale as well as in the large-scale enterprises of wealthy Bida merchants. Trade in certain European goods allows a more rapid turnover and more certain profits than any branch of native economy. The native trader or middleman can, as we have just seen, turn to his profit the fact that he can make certain essential and highly valued goods accessible to the consumer by retailing them in such small quantities that their price (though relatively high) is low enough to be within the means of peasants and small craftsmen. It is, for example, a regular practice of Bida women traders to buy tins of 50 cigarettes at the 'canteen', and to sell them singly (or even cut in half); to buy boxes of matches, and sell them in little bundles of five; packets of sugar, and sell the sugar a piece or two at the time; or to buy 4-gallon tins of paraffin, and sell it in pint bottles. It is hardly surprising that the profits, though absolutely small, are relatively high, up to 100 per cent.[2]

[1] This fear is really a compound of shyness and suspicion—one is suspicious just because one is shy and unfamiliar with the ways of these modern institutions. A most characteristic instance, concerning a Bida man [illegible], one would think, would hardly need to be shy or afraid, is the following: a Bida Mallam with whom I was very friendly came to see me one day and asked me if I would do him a favour and order spare tyres from the 'canteen' for a lorry belonging to a friend of his. His friend, he explained, disliked ordering them himself, for he knew he would be cheated and given the wrong kind of tyres. What had happened was that his friend had some time previously ordered tyres without, however, knowing that it was necessary to quote the exact size. He had been given tyres of the size most frequently found on the lorries running in the country, but unfortunately they did not fit his lorry.

[2] One tin of 50 cigarettes costs 1*s.*; one cigarette is sold for 0·3*d.*, allowing a profit of 3*d.* in 1*s.* One box of matches, containing approximately 50 matches, costs 1*d.*; five matches sold for 0·2*d.* give a profit of 0·8*d.* in the penny. One

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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It is impossible to discuss in detail the business enterprises of the big merchants of Bida. Their business activities hardly differ in essentials from the business activities of Western civilization. They are the wholesale traders who, working with large capital, buy goods from the European stores and supply the small retail trader with commodities which the latter sells in small quantities in the town market or peddles in villages and local markets. Some big merchants are contractors who run lorries for the transport of passengers and goods, others importers of goods from countries outside Nupe. Their business is to a large extent based on credit which they receive from the European trading-companies, and there are several Bida merchants who figure on the books of the trading-companies with debit accounts of £200 or more. I will only outline the effect which the introduction of commercial credit in the modern sense has had upon Nupe economy. The concept of credit itself is not alien to Nupe economy; but this new type of credit, which can be so readily obtained, opened to the Nupe trader a source, not only of working capital, but also of liquid capital as such. Native business men have learned to use this new economic device to the full, and in their own way—which is not always the orthodox way of credit operations. This is an actual and, I may add, typical instance: a Bida trader bought European cloth for £3 in the store, on a three months' credit. He then sold the cloth at a loss, for £2, to a retail trader who was not unnaturally very ready to pay in cash for these goods the normal price of which was well known to him. With the £2 our trader went round to the villages buying in advance the cotton crop of the year (this happened two months before the harvest was due). He paid an *extremely low price—in certain cases* only the annual tax-money of the farmer—and two months later sold the crop to the trading-company for an amount which was sufficient to pay his debt and to make a profit of £1 in addition.[1]

The increasing volume of European trade in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa is due to a large variety of causes. The cheapness and, generally, better quality of the European goods is often mentioned, and also the change of taste which is brought about by education and by the example of European standards of living. Our short survey of the influence of European trade upon the native economy in Nupe has revealed another aspect of the problem, the importance of which has hitherto been hardly realized. Trade in European goods, *qua* trade, is a highly lucrative enterprise which opens up a chance for business and profits unrivalled in purely native economy. It is to a considerable extent the native trader himself who is pushing trade in European goods. He is its keenest propagandist, for he is the one who benefits first and most.

4-gallon tin of paraffin costs 7*s.* 6*d.*; one bottle is sold for 6*d.*, giving a profit of 8*s.* The higher the investment, the higher evidently the profit.

[1] The device as such, to sell goods at a loss for the sake of ready money, and to make the loss good on a subsequent sale, is not new. Hausa traders, for example, sometimes sell their (native) goods at a loss in Bida in order to obtain money, and with this money to buy certain Bida goods which they can sell in Hausa country at a profit large enough to cover their previous loss.

### Hunting and Fishing

224 Hunting is a significant if minor activity in some villages where it is practised by the special guild of hunters under their hereditary head *ndace*, "father of the hunters"). Nets, traps, bows-and-arrows, and occasionally flintlocks are used. Among the separated sections of the Nupe in the more sparsely populated areas, e.g., the Ebe and Basa-Nge, hunting plays a much more important part in the local economy. In the country surrounding Bida hunting has disappeared altogether.

226 The smaller rivers and creeks of Nupe country are rich in fish,[16] which are caught by spear, line, and basket; larger fish are also caught by traps and seine nets. The Kyedye use hooks laid in lines of about 100. The Bataci fish mainly in pools to which special rights attach (see below, p. 40). Nupe women trade dried [439] fish to the Igbona (Yoruba) area of Ilorin Emirate. Dried fish are also exported to Ilorin and farther south from Pategi-Lafiagi.

### Markets and Trade[17]

443 Bida town has six markets, including one night market, and every other town and village has its regular market. Specialist traders travel long distances to the markets, though women who trade only as a side-line rarely attend markets more than 10 miles from their homes. Villages on the trade routes to places such as Bida or Ilorin become "relay stations" at which local traders sell to wholesalers. The stores of the European and Asiatic traders are centres for the marketing of commercial crops.

441 Specialist traders are usually men and women from Bida town. Those who go 443 outside Nupe country may stay months or years in one place, sometimes forming a Nupe enclave. There is a distinction between traders and brokers (*dilali*); the latter undertake to sell goods on commission and are organized under a guild-head.

435 Market prices are well defined and those of local produce fluctuate by season. But many goods have fixed prices and bargaining is rare except for the expensive, more rarely sold commodities.[18] Prices in Bida market are nearly always higher than in the country districts. In the country districts food prices are commonly quoted in cowries, the exchange value of which varies.

439 Railways, river steamers, and road transport have become important for market- 49 ing and in the development of production, and Nupe country is an important transit area in the north–south trade across Nigeria. The Kyedye[19] sub-tribe have a monopoly of the river traffic. Muregi is an important ferry point for Hausa traders. The ferrying rights and duties pass from compound to compound in a cycle which, together with the ferrying fees, is regulated by the Chief of the Kyedye and the village head of Muregi. The Kakanda, who are traders, formerly had the monopoly of the river traffic south of Egan, but now share this with the Kyedye. The Basa-Nge[20] also trade by canoe: their exports are handled by Nupe, Kakanda, and Igbira canoe owners, and include palm kernels, palm-oil, and cotton to Lokoja and Itobe, yams, maize, and beans to Onitsha.

439 Exports from Nupe country consist mainly of agricultural produce—rice, shea-nuts, good quality kola-nuts, smoked fish—and products of the local industries, cloth, straw hats, mats, etc. Imports include foodstuffs, mainly palm-oil, salt, and cheap kola-nuts, also potash and livestock. Re-exports include potash and beans from the north to the south, and palm-oil, salt, and kola-nuts from the south to the north. The import or export trade in one commodity is generally combined with a return trade in another.

[16] See Hermon-Hodge, 1929, p. 181 for a list of Niger fish with their Nupe names.

[17] This section is based mainly on Nadel, 1942, pp. 314–34, and relates to the period before the 1939–45 war.

[18] But according to Malam Aliyu Bida, Nupe are excellent bargainers and are known to the Hausa as *Mazu Kolo Kolo*, "the hagglers."

[19] Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[20] Hopkins, 1934.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [984 672]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [935] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 696 [866]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [862] 586

**Nigeria: Pottery.** **Nicholson.**

**Bida (Nupe) Pottery.** *By W. E. Nicholson.*

These notes refer to one only of the groups of potters in Bida, Niger Province, and the actual workers observed belong to Augi's house in the Quarter of Natsu.

I. *Workers.*—All the operators are women. The family came originally from Sokoto, but the mother of the present potters is said to have learnt the trade from a Yoruba woman, *i.e.*, the technique may be Yoruba or Nupe in origin. All are Mohammedans, so that the survival of tabus, etc., in the craft is not to be expected, and no trace of them was found.

Two varieties of article are made:—

(i) Small water jug, chiefly used for ablutionary purposes, called in Nupe *Masuge* (equivalent to the Hausa *Buta* or *Shantali*—Man, 1929, 34).

(ii) A larger water-container called in Nupe *Dutā-agetā* (equivalent to the Hausa *Pakunsa*—Man 1931, 186).

The following notes refer to the former only of these.

II. *Preparation of the Clay.*—Suitable clay is found in the swamps of the Gbako river at Badeggi, about 10 miles east of Bida. Itinerant vendors from this village bring it round for sale, and it costs about 10d. per cwt. During part of the rainy season floods prevent its collection. The clay is pounded to powder in a wooden mortar identical with that used in the preparation of food. It is levigated—

(i) Usually by the addition of powdered potsherds: this powder is sifted before being added to the clay, through a sieve made of slivers of bamboo.

(ii) Sometimes native bricks of sun-dried mud are burnt and powdered and used instead of potsherds.

After the addition of the levigating material the clay is wetted until it attains the right consistency.

III. *Building of the Pot.*—(*a*) Old cloths are spread on the ground and the operator places in front of herself a flat sand-stone slab about 1 inch thick; it is said that these stones are purchased from the Bead-makers and that they come from further south in Ilorin country; they are 'natural,' *i.e.*, pieces of stratified rock which splits into suitable thicknesses; the slab is well dusted with powdered potsherds to prevent sticking. A ball of clay (*a* (i)) is placed on the slab, manipulated into a 'pancake' (*a* (ii)) and beaten out thin with a stone hand-beater; any

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida



(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :— 323 531

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed' chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

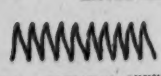

FIG. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

FIG. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles. [237]

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests. 323

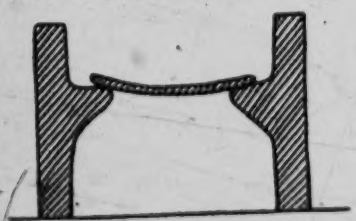

FIG. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*— 323 531

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black. [386] [404]

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :— [435]

(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

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[p. 73]